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THE PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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THE PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

AT THEIR ANNIVERSARY MEETING

IN THE HIGH CHURCH OF EDINBURGH,

Thurſday, May 30. 1793.

BY THOMAS HARDY, D. D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE CITY, AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, wood, hay, ſtubble: every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt: for the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire; and the fire ſhall try every man's work, of what ſort it is.——1 COR. iii. 11.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY JOHN PATERSON.

M DCC XCIV.

EDINBURGH, 30*th May*, 1793.

At a General Meeting of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Chriſtian Knowledge,

The Earl of Leven, Preſident, in the Chair,

THE thanks of the Society were given from the Chair to the Rev. Dr. Hardy, for his excellent Sermon this day preached before them; and he was requeſted to give his manuſcript of the ſame, to be printed for the benefit of the Society.

Jo. KEMP, Sec.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

DAVID EARL OF LEVEN AND MELVILL,

PRESIDENT

OF THE

SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND

FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

THE FOLLOWING SERMON

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

Form of a Bequeſt or Legacy.

Item, I give and bequeath the ſum of
to the *Society in Scotland for propagating Chriſtian Knowledge*, to be applied, either to the general objects of the inſtitution, or to ſuch particular purpoſes, conſiſtent with theſe objects, as the donor may think proper.

N. B. Thoſe who may be pleaſed to favour this Society with Bequeſts or Legacies, are intreated to expreſs their intention in the very words above directed; and particularly to take care that the words, *in Scotland*, be not omitted.

ERRATUM.

Page 62. line 3. from foot, for *ſixty three* read *fifty three*.

THE

PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

A

SERMON.

HEB. ii. 8.

BUT NOW WE SEE NOT YET ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM.

THE idea of an Univerſal Religion is liberal and great. It was not found among the poliſhed nations of antiquity; it was not even a topic of ſpeculation in the philoſophic ſchools: It was preſerved, however, where leaſt of all it might have been expected, in the treaſures of the ſanctuary, among a people who inhabited the mountains of Paleſtine. That people were diſtinguiſhed by the pride of excluſive privilege,

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rather than by any tendency to liberality of ſentiment; and their laws, government, and worſhip, were viſibly calculated to prevent all religious communion with other nations. The deſcendants of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, imagined that the divine favour, like the covenant of peculiarity, did not extend beyond the line in which the blood of the patriarchs flowed; yet they held in their hands the oracles repeated from heaven to each of theſe men, that *in their ſeed ſhould all the families of the earth be bleſſed.*

The prophets, who in ſucceſſion foretold the advent of the Meſſiah, exhibited him as the head of an univerſal religion. In the prophetic page, he is introduced laying his claim to this character, as aſſigned to him by the will of God: *I will declare the decree, The Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Aſk of me, and I ſhall give thee the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* The very title of the *Son*, in various inſtances in holy writ, implies the extent of the grant, as comprehending the whole human race, according to the plenitude of power, in contradiſtinction

to

to the powers both of the angels and of the prophets, who were as ſervants under limited commiſſions, poſſeſſing authority over a part only of the houſehold. *For unto which of the angels ſaid he at any time, thou art my ſon; this day have I begotten thee? Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?* God ſpake to the fathers by the prophets, but to us he has ſpoken by his *Son* whom he hath appointed *heir of all things.*

The unbounded ſucceſs of the Meſſiah is expreſſed in ſuch terms as theſe. *Liſten, O iſles, unto me, and hearken ye people from far. —Though Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God ſhall be my ſtrength.—And he ſaid unto me it is a light thing that thou ſhouldeſt be my ſervant to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation unto the ends of the earth.—Behold my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles.—He ſhall not fail nor be diſcouraged till he have ſet judgement in the earth, and the iſles ſhall wait*

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for his law. For from the riſing of the ſun even unto the going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the Gentiles. And in every place incenſe ſhall be offered to my name and a pure offering: for my name ſhall be great among the Heathen ſaith the Lord of Hoſts *.

The prophets, whom God inſpired to foretel the univerſal religion, gave thoſe conſiſtent aſſurances on this great ſubject which were ſuitable to the wiſdom of the ways of Providence; for they ſhewed that the new covenant ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from the old in its ſubſtance, as well as in its extent; that the law of God ſhould be written in the heart, and the ſceptre of his kingdom a ſceptre of righteouſneſs. The inſtitutions of the Moſaic law were abſolutely incapable of an univerſal eſtabliſhment. Sacrifices limited to a ſingle temple; the ſanctity of places; a burdenſome ritual; a ſacerdotal tribe; an high prieſt on earth; theſe, and many other arrangements in that proviſional ſyſtem, were not only incompatible with general religious union, but, as Paul reaſoned irreſiſtibly, in proof of their neceſſary abolition under an univerſal

* Iſ. xlix. 5. 6. xlii. 1. 4. Mal. i. 11.

verſal religion, the peculiarities of the Moſaic oeconomy were actually framed and intended to exclude the Gentiles while that ſyſtem ſhould ſtand. This law of commandments contained in ordinances, was a handwriting againſt them, an edict of ſeparation limiting the covenant to a few, which was reſcinded and nailed to the croſs, when the Meſſiah was cut off, and *confirmed the covenant with many.*

The religion of nature was the firſt univerſal diſpenſation; ſimple in its characters; holy in its laws, and accommodated to every ſituation of man upon the earth. It had been gradually corrupted by various ſuperſtitions, and its ſtate had become hopeleſs; for the ſuperſtitions had been confirmed and entailed by power and craft in every age. The complaint of nature went up in memorial before God; and Chriſtianity, the ſecond univerſal diſpenſation, was introduced in the fullneſs of time. The goſpel interpreted the handwriting on the heart, reſtored the original record in its beauty, and added new illuſtrations of the grace of God and of the duty of man; while it poſſeſſed every requiſite for obtaining that reception among the nations which the oracles of God had foretold.

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The apoſtle who wrote to the Hebrews, about 35 years after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, had ſeen a part of the ſcene which the prophets had ſketched filled up by the hand of Providence. Jeſus, who had been made lower than the angels for a little, had been crowned with glory and honour; his religion had been embraced by thouſands and tens of thouſands in Aſia, in Africa, and in Europe; it was advancing with a rapidity which was aſtoniſhing and delightful: every thing ſeemed to preſage its unlimited ſucceſs; though the ſhort period which had as yet elapſed had not afforded time for the completion of its victories. *But now we ſee not yet all things put under him.* Seventeen hundred years more, my brethren, have been numbered to the human race, and many generations of men have paſſed in ſucceſſion over the ſcene of time, and gone down into the grave: and now we ſee not yet all things put under Chriſt. For ſome ages after the death of his apoſtles, the religion of Jeſus continued to proſper and to prevail; it then declined from its purity, and its progreſs was ſuddenly ſuſpended. Long it lay enfeebled and degraded under the yoke of corruption, impoſed by the ſame means, and faſtened upon it by the ſame hands which had ruined natural religion. With-

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in theſe three centuries it has been gradually recovering its pure and ſimple honours, but has not yet been able to go forth to make new conqueſts among the Heathen.

Let us reverently inquire into theſe things, and conſider,

I. The cauſes of the ſucceſs of Chriſtianity in the firſt ages.

II. The cauſes of the ſuſpenſion of its progreſs.

III. The preſent aſpect of the Chriſtian world.

I. We are to conſider the cauſes of the ſucceſs of Chriſtianity in the firſt ages.

During the age of the apoſtles, the truth and authority of the Chriſtian diſpenſation were evinced to the world by extraordinary proofs. Miraculous works were performed under the miniſtry of the teachers; the ſick were healed, the knowledge of languages was inſtantaneouſly conveyed, and by various other gifts of the Spirit an external evidence attended and ſuſtained

tained the progreſs of the faith. Theſe palpable characters of the divine interpoſition were neceſſary in the firſt introduction of the great cauſe upon earth, and they were to go into the record of the New Teſtament, aſcertained by the teſtimony of apoſtles and martyrs, for the inſtruction of future ages. But the miraculous powers could not be permitted to attend Chriſtianity through the whole of its progreſs; nor even to continue through any long courſe of time, conſiſtently with the order of providence in the moral government of mankind. The exact time of the ceſſation of theſe powers cannot now be fixed. But there remains no good evidence of any one ſpecific miracle within the Chriſtian church later than the period of the fall of Jeruſalem. For ages after that event, however, the religion of Jeſus continued to make a rapid and deciſive progreſs among the nations; and that it did make this progreſs without the preſence of miraculous atteſtations, furniſhes an experimental proof, that the means of the propagation of Chriſtianity are attainable at all times under ordinary providence; that the ſame cauſes which in the ſecond and third centuries carried *righteouſneſs unto victory*, would, if fairly brought into operation, produce the like effects in any other

other age; and that if the progreſs of the goſpel has been obſtructed, and is ſtill obſtructed, it muſt be owing to the church itſelf preſenting a different aſpect to the heathen, from that which it exhibited in the days of its power.

The leading cauſe of the ſucceſs of the goſpel in the early ages was the eſſential excellence of the ſyſtem. The apoſtle Paul who was deeply ſenſible of the inherent ſtrength of Chriſtianity, as founded in its permanent characters, abſtracted from the miraculous gifts which ſuited only its infant condition, obſerved, that when the extraordinary communications of prophecy, of tongues, and of knowledge, ſhould ceaſe and vaniſh away, there ſhould ſtill remain the unalterable glories of Chriſtianity, its Faith, its Hope, its Charity; that theſe belong to the church in its maturity, *when that which is perfect is come;* and that of theſe Charity is the greateſt.

When the Chriſtians reaſoned with the Heathens on the vanity of Polytheiſm and idolatry; and when, in oppoſition to the prejudices of the popular ſuperſtition, they declared the truth in its native ſimplicity, their ſucceſs was cer-

tain ; they prevailed through the obvious goodneſs of their cauſe. The doctrine of the goſpel beaming its pure light on the underſtanding, produced immediate and ſteady conviction : The facts of the New Teſtament attaching upon the heart, created an intereſt which was fervent and effective ; while the ſound morality of the whole ſyſtem impreſſed on the conſcience the direct and inſtant ſenſe of obligation.

In conferences between the ſubjects of the Pagan ſyſtem, and the followers of the new religion, the Chriſtian advocate ſtood on the ſtrong ground of nature, when he teſtified the firſt and moſt ſublime truth in the univerſe, " God " is One, he is holy, he is good." The moment that this primitive doctrine was reſtored to the mind of men, and fully underſtood and embraced, Heatheniſm fell to pieces ; the profligate viſions of Olympus diſappeared ; ſuperſtition was left utterly defenceleſs ; the hearer was already almoſt perſuaded to become a Chriſtian ; and he was altogether perſuaded, as ſoon as he underſtood the religion in its body and ſpirit, and perceived its uniform reference to the moral character of the Eternal One.

Chriſtianity

Chriſtianity as a ſcheme of doctrine declares, among other great and attractive principles, That God has made of one blood all the nations; that they are alike related to him the great Parent in his family of mankind: That he dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worſhipped with gifts or ſacrifices, as though he needed any thing; but is ſerved by piety and humanity, and worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth: That his providence is particular and univerſal: That his cares and influence extend to the ſpirits of men, as well as to their outward condition: That he has looked with compaſſion on his offſpring, diſtreſſed and toiling amidſt ignorance, ſorrow, ſin, and death: That Jeſus Chriſt is come from God, ſent according to the riches of divine grace, to enlighten, to ſave, and to bleſs mankind: That God, according to his infinite wiſdom, in reſtoring his ſons, perfected the Leader of their deliverance by ſufferings, and has now exalted him as a Prince and a Saviour, to give them repentance and the remiſſion of ſins: That this life is a ſtate of probation: That after death is the judgement, in which will be peculiarly reſpected, our benignity and mercy, our probity and holineſs in the conduct of life, and our progreſs in religious

religious attainments, correſponding to the advantages which we have enjoyed.

Chriſtianity, as a declaration of facts, ſhews the incarnation of the Saviour in humility; his life perfect in ſanctity and eminent in goodneſs; his affection to his friends, his compaſſion to his enemies, his rejection of all earthly honours, his avoiding both alliance and hoſtility with political ſyſtems, his diſclaiming on the part of his followers any power civil or ſpiritual, as attached either to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity or to the office of teachers of his religion; his requiring from his followers a ſtrictneſs of principle, which ſhould never be overcome of evil; his own unalterable fidelity amidſt reproach, perſecution, and the pains of death; his reſurrection in power; his aſcenſion in glory. Theſe are the hiſtorical characters of the grand interpoſition: they are intereſting, and they are alſo credible; for to the eye of reaſon and reflection they appear to be moſt eminently calculated to introduce with advantage a diſpenſation of piety and virtue, and to unite mankind in an holy and catholic church.

Chriſtianity

Chriſtianity as an inſtitute of the Divine Law ſpeaks home to the natural conſcience; it ſets at nought the whole artifice of ſuperſtition, the folly or the fraud by which the world has been held in bondage; the contrivances to enſure the ſoul without the ſacrifices of its vices; the pageantry, the formalities, or the bribery by which men have ſought to pleaſe God without the practice of virtue, and to eſcape from puniſhment, without the trouble of repentance unto newneſs of life. Chriſtianity declares that virtue is the law of God; that this is his will, even our ſanctification; that as God is holy, we ought to be holy; and that as he is good, we ought to conform to his image in kindneſs, forbearance, mercy, even in that charity which is the genuine tranſcript of the Father's goodneſs, and which is enthroned in the Chriſtian diſpenſation above faith and hope. Theſe views of religious obligation claim the aſſent of the conſcience. Men feel the power of the truth in this caſe from the firſt moment, and before they have courage to own their convictions, or have got any compleat victory over their prejudices. And this whole ſcheme of doctrines, facts, and laws, even Chriſtianity as it was ſpoken by the Lord and confirmed to us by them that heard him,

him, is calculated for univerſal reception as the religion of the human race. It has nothing local, nothing excluſive, no holy places, no ſtated faſts or feſtivals, no laborious ritual, no ſacerdotal domination, no altar, no bloodſhed but that of its Founder and his witneſſes, no ſpecial accommodation to particular forms of government or modes of life. In all its parts it alike applies to the families of the ſimple hunters in the wilderneſs, of the ſhepherds on their mountains, of the poliſhed citizen, of the freeman and the ſlave.

We have here to meet a prejudice which has been often entertained on this ſubject, that ſome conſiderable progreſs in civilization is previouſly neceſſary to prepare a people for the reception of Chriſtianity. You muſt firſt make them men, ſay the patrons of this opinion, before you think of making them Chriſtians. You muſt teach them to live in fixed habitations, to aſſociate in villages, to cultivate the ſoil, and then you may hope that they will hear and underſtand when you unfold the ſublime principles of the goſpel. This opinion has been ſupported by the abilities of a prelate, who whether defending the legation of Moſes or diſ-

cuſſing

cuſſing the Chriſtian doctrine, ſcorned to avail himſelf of the advantage of ground, but generally made the forlorn hope his option.

The opinion itſelf ſuppoſes a wider difference between the underſtanding of the man of the woods and the man of the city than what does in fact take place; and it ſuppoſes the goſpel to be ſomething more intricate than any of the words of Chriſt ſeem to imply. It oppoſes the claim of Chriſtianity to be an univerſal religion, conſidering it as adapted to mankind in ſome ſituations, but not in all; and it would place a final bar in the way of our hopes of any ſucceſs to our religion on the ſide of Tartary and America, where the reluctance of the people to a ſtationary life is a part of the national character. That in the caſe of the Americans, a change of life to fixed habitations, to agriculture, to civilization and the arts, would be a matter of immenſe benefit to the people themſelves, is undoubted: it is indeed the only expedient which can ſave the whole old nations of the Continent from that extermination with which they are threatened by the European coloniſts. But the aid of Chriſtianity ſeems to be neceſſary to facilitate this change of ſituation to civil life, inſtead

ſtead of depending for its own reception on the previous accompliſhment of this change. Chriſtianity does not require any ſpecific alterations to be made in the regulations of civil or political ſociety; but its ſpirit is propitious to all good works, it mitigates the tempers of men, it unites them in worſhip, in humanity, and in love, and is thus highly favourable to civilization, and to the eſſential improvement of the nations.

Shall it be ſaid that the Indian wanderer has not a comprehenſion equal to the admiſſion of the Chriſtian doctrine? This is the current apology for the failure of the miſſions, but is not the real truth of the caſe.—The human mind is not in any country below the reach of diſcipline and religious inſtruction. The American Indian, the Pacific Iſlander, and the African Negro are ſhrewd men, whoſe intellectual capacity will not ſuffer in the compariſon with the uneducated claſſes of people on the Continent of Europe. Indeed the popular ſpeculation on national diverſities of character, as fixed appearances in the human ſpecies, and the claſſification of intellects, according either to phyſical cauſes or modes of living, is at beſt but hypotheſis; and in the degree to which it has been ſometimes

ſometimes carried, is extravagant hypotheſis and preſumption. The ſavage people now mentioned poſſeſs already the ſublime doctrines on which Chriſtianity is reared. They acknowledge the great Spirit, and adore him with humble proſtration; and they truſt that they ſhall again meet their friends and companions in the world of ſpirits. With ſo much true religion they have almoſt no ſuperſtition; and have little to unlearn, except in ſome moral habits, which Chriſtianity would correct and reform. What is there then in the ſtate of theſe people which ſhould wholly obſtruct their reception of the truth? Were the poor of Syria and Paleſtine, to whom Chriſt and his apoſtles preached the goſpel, ſo much ſuperior in mental accompliſhments to the ſagacious Indian and the honeſt Negro? This will not ſatisfy an impartial inquirer, who knows the hiſtorical facts, and who knows further how plain and ſimple, and how happily adapted to the comprehenſion of mankind at large, the Chriſtian doctrine is in its ſubſtance, even in all that is neceſſary to ſalvation. It certainly does not require any previous proficiency in arts and ſciences, to underſtand that God is good, and to love him; to own Jeſus Chriſt as a ſpiritual Prince and Saviour; to love one ano-

ther; to be harmleſs and patient and gentle; to have pure thoughts and kind affections; and in fine, to receive the whole inheritance of faith, hope, and charity. I thank thee, O Father, ſaid our Lord, that thoſe things which have been hid from the wiſe and prudent are now revealed unto babes. It is true, that the full elucidation of Chriſtian theology is a work for the ſcholar and philoſopher, and that the moſt profound reſearch into this ſubject will be repaid with new and glorious views of the riches of Divine grace, and of the treaſures of the goſpel; but the great lines of the Chriſtian diſpenſation are plain and obvious. It is alſo true, that if the teachers of Chriſtianity themſelves miſtake their ſubject, which is a poſſible caſe, under the ſeduction of any falſe philoſophy; if they go to the Miſiſſippi, or to the Gambia, with a ſyſtem of metaphyſics in their hands, inſtead of the rational and attractive theology of the New Teſtament, they will find that the natives are indeed utterly unprepared to attend to the jargon which is offered to them for religion, and that it is abſolutely impoſſible to make converts to a ſcheme of hard words, nice diſtinctions, and the quirks which European divines have been

been accuſtomed to employ in their ſcholaſtic or ſynodical litigations.

The eſſential excellence of the Chriſtian religion was the firſt and leading cauſe of its ſucceſs in the early ages; it was ſupported and juſtified before the Heathen by the lives of the Chriſtians, and by the character and conduct of the teachers. The lives of the early Chriſtians formed an experimental argument in favour of their religious principles; and a moſt intereſting argument it muſt have been, when, even in the third century, the writers in defence of Chriſtianity were able to lay their appeal to the records of the Roman tribunals in ſupport of their aſſertion, that no Chriſtian had ever been brought before the imperial judges charged with any crime except his religion. To ſuch innocence in civil life the Chriſtians added the moſt cordial attachment to each other, proved by the daily practice of good works. This however was what might have been expected in a ſet of men who were as yet the minority in the ranks of ſociety, and who were treated with harſhneſs and indignity by the ruling powers: And their brotherly kindneſs within the pale of the church is leſs ſurpriſing than their charity to

all

all other men. The principle of benevolence, which they learned among the earlieſt and the moſt ſacred leſſons in the ſchool of Chriſt, led them to look upon every man as a neighbour, even though a Pagan or an infidel. The zeal for good works which glowed in their boſoms rendered them all ready inſtructors of others, and advocates for their religion amidſt their civil tranſactions with the Heathen. The buſineſs of extending the progreſs of the goſpel was not left merely to a few eccleſiaſtical miſſionaries, but was the object of the faithful at large, as far as the influence and connections of each individual reſpectively extended.

The preſbyters of the church, the public teachers, were indeed peculiarly active in advancing the progreſs of the great cauſe, and the obvious characters of their miniſtry were favourable to their ſucceſs. They had no ſelfiſh purpoſes to ſerve, no profeſſional ambition to be gratified, by extending the bounds of eccleſiaſtical dominion; they made no invaſion on the rights of the people, no aſſociation of the idea of converſion to Chriſtianity with that of ſubjection to a new ſacerdotal authority in all the points of opinion, diſcipline, and worſhip. The Chriſtian teachers

ers were as humble in ſpirit as they were zealous of good works; they reaſoned on the ſubject of their meſſage with calmneſs, good temper, and kind affection: with nothing of that pride of ſyſtem which ſubſtitutes arrogance for reaſoning; which commands where it ought to perſuade; and, which, in the impatience of oppoſition, calls for fire from heaven to conſume the gainſayers, inſtead of acquainting them with the ſpirit of him who came not to deſtroy but to ſave.

Chriſtianity then, as it was tendered to men in the early ages, could not fail of ſucceſs. At length however, it incurred a great and laſting check.—We are now to conſider,

II. The cauſes of the ſuſpenſion of its progreſs.——The countenance of the Imperial government, which the church obtained in the reign of Conſtantine, was naturally calculated to promote, inſtead of obſtructing, the progreſs of the faith. That great revolution, however, by which the church was brought forward from perſecution and affliction to victory and triumph, required above all things to have been followed out in the exerciſe of prudence, and with the moſt delicate and ſcrupulous attention to thoſe prin-

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ciples by which Chriſt and his apoſtles had regulated the firſt movements in the great cauſe. Unhappily the early Chriſtian emperors departed alike from prudence and from evangelical principle in their public meaſures relative to Chriſtianity. Theſe meaſures had three objects: To oblige their Heathen ſubjects to become Chriſtians; to oblige all the Chriſtians to hold the ſame opinions in ſpeculative ſubjects; and to increaſe the power of the clergy.

The continued purſuit of theſe ends for ſeveral reigns produced effects which were deciſive and fatal. The Pagans, perceiving that Chriſtianity was become the road to preferment, and finding themſelves firſt ſubjected to diſabilities, and afterwards to penalties, for continuing to worſhip the gods of their anceſtors, abandoned their profeſſion, and flocked into the church by hundreds and by thouſands. Their converſion was nominal, and was not founded on conviction; they retained the prejudices of their ſuperſtition unſubdued, inſtead of throwing them down at the foot of the croſs. They could not ſee the kingdom of God in its proper character, for they were not born again in the ſpirit of truth; they came not as little children under the

the tuition of Chriſt; they introduced into the church itſelf the eſſential principles of Paganiſm; by their numbers, they gave to thoſe principles a footing which was permanent, and which a great part of Chriſtendom has not even yet been able ro remove.

The terrible influx of the Pagans, upon the converſion of the court, corrupted the church: and the reſolution of the emperors to have but one religion among their ſubjects, brought unſpeakable detriment to the cauſe which they meant to ſupport. The other two objects of the imperial policy were not more fortunate in the event; for, in endeavouring by the ſecular arm to compel all the Chriſtians to entertain the ſame ſpeculative opinions on the queſtions then debated, the ſovereigns at once turned free diſcuſſion into controverſy and ſtrife; they inflamed, inſtead of extinguiſhing party ſpirit; they formally divided the church into ſects; they entailed the diſputes of their own times as an inheritance of ſorrow to poſterity, and wrote *intolerance* over the portal of the houſe of God.

The elevation of the clergy to *power*, by which the teachers of the humble religion of Jeſus were

were transformed into an ambitious prieſthood, was the creation of a formidable ſupport to any ſuperſtitions which might find acceſs to the church, and at the ſame time an effectual clog to prevent the progreſs of the Chriſtian faith in new regions. Thus, in conſequence of fatal indiſcretion in the meaſures of the court, and of a ſyſtem of policy erroneous in principle, Chriſtianity ſuffered infinitely more miſchief from Conſtantine, than it had done from Diocletian; and received wounds from the hands of Theodoſius, ſuch as Julian could never have inflicted.

The mode of corruption which Chriſtianity experienced, during its period of decline in the fourth and fifth centuries, conſiſted partly in an extenſion of the ritual, which transformed the religion in its obvious characters from the diſcipline of the heart, to a pitiful exhibition of geſtures, forms, and pageantry; and partly in the introduction of dark theories imported from the academies of the Egyptian ſophiſts, and mixed with the doctrine of the goſpel, as alloy and droſs, debaſing the gold of the ſanctuary. By the extended ritual and the myſticiſm together, the beauty and authority of religion as a practical rule was loſt, the actual redemption from

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vice, and the improvement of men individually in piety and holineſs, for which the Lord of the Chriſtians had laboured and bled, were in effect ſet aſide, and ſupplanted by new contrivances which were adopted as ſubſtitutes for eternal virtue. From all this it followed, that to tender to a new nation the religion as now altered in ſubſtance, was to offer ſomething elſe than that which the experience of three centuries had proved to be calculated for ſucceſs; it was to offer ſomething, which having no foundation in human nature, no ſupport from right reaſon, no accommodation to the general exigencies of the human race, could not ſucceed; of courſe it did not ſucceed; men would not exchange for it the opinions and rites of their fathers, and their reluctance is in no degree ſurpriſing.

The preſent argument places us on ſtrong ground to meet a prejudice by which many ſpeculative and ſagacious men have been miſled. It is, That ſuperſtition is neceſſary in human life: That ſimple and rational religion cannot attract and fix the bulk of mankind: That either pageantry or myſticiſm, or both, muſt be employed to keep religion afloat: and,

That the people muſt in ſome degree be deceived for their good.

If theſe maxims were well founded, they would preſent a more humiliating view of the nature of man than any other principles in the philoſophy of our ſpecies, for they imply that prejudice and folly are actually to be depended on as the guides of human life, and not truth and reaſon.

Now, it is to be obſerved, that the plan of Jeſus Chriſt for gaining and keeping the people, proceeded on principles directly oppoſite to theſe. His doctrine in the ſimple majeſty of truth, was without any addition or fictitious embelliſhment revealed unto babes; it was unfolded by degrees indeed, as they were able to bear it; but in no caſe was it contaminated by the ſmalleſt particle of ſuperſtition, folly, or deception. The entire fairneſs of the goſpel diſpenſation, as one doctrine given alike to the wiſe and the ſimple, was its character, announced in prophecy, in oppoſition to the double doctrine of the philoſophic ſchools; and to this character Jeſus appealed: Go and ſhew John, ſaid he, the things which ye ſee and hear;—the blind receive

ceive their ſight, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed, and *to the poor the goſpel is preached.*

We have now ſeen, that the additions of ſuperſtition and myſtery which were made to the Chriſtian doctrine in the fourth and fifth centuries, inſtead of rendering it more fit to attract the affections of mankind, as the prieſts vainly and ignorantly imagined, arreſted its progreſs, affected the body of the church as with a mortal palſy, and left mankind to wonder as much at its imbecillity after that period, as they had admired its ſtrength before it was thus diſeaſed.

The removal of the prejudice now under diſcuſſion is a matter of conſequence to mankind. I mean therefore farther to expoſe it by ſtating, that in various ages and countries the men who have endeavoured to ſimplify religion, and to throw off ſuperſtition, have been ſupported by the multitude, while there is no inſtance in which the people have freely conſented to exchange a ſimple faith for a complicated and ſuperſtitious ritual. It is only by gradual ſteps that ſuperſtition has ever gained ground; it is an unnatural ſtate of the human mind: Men have

have been cheated into ſuperſtition. So far from being cheriſhed by the people for its own ſake, they have on every opportunity manifeſted the eagerneſs of impatience to throw it off; and unleſs when held back by the force of the civil arm, they have flocked around every reformer who would venture to pronounce that their ſuperſtition was all folly, and who would treat them as reaſonable creatures, by uttering a few plain truths, of which their own underſtandings and conſciences could form a judgement.

When Zoroaſter undertook to reform the religion of Perſia, and, in oppoſition to the leaders of the Magi, reſtored to the popular faith the doctrine of the Eternal One, the Source of exiſtence and of glory, the Superior of the Angel of Good and the Angel of Evil, the joint miniſters of Providence: when he reſtricted the worſhip of his followers to the good beings only, and taught that the dead ſhould be judged in equity, inſtead of being ſtaked in the lottery of fate according to the predominance of the good or the evil being; he had nothing to ſupport him but the ſuperiority of his ſyſtem in its plainer accommodation to the unſophiſticated dictates of the mind; yet he was ſucceſsful,

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and the effects of his reformation are not to to this day wholly loſt in Perſia.

When Confucius, in whoſe family the patriarchal traditions had fortunately been preſerved in conſiderable purity, perceived with ſorrow the degeneracy of China, he ſpoke to his countrymen as a philoſopher and a reformer; he claimed no divine commiſſion; he declared that his doctrine was not his own, but that of the ancients, handed down by tradition: he was liſtened to with avidity wherever he went; whole provinces declared their converſion; and his ſyſtem, which conſiſted in the ſimple worſhip of the God of heaven, and the practice of moral virtue, became predominant for ages in the empire.

Let us attend to the facts in the Chriſtian hiſtory which naturally bear reſpect to the ſame argument. During the long period in which ſuperſtition had fixed its throne on the ruins of Chriſtianity before the Reformation, the people felt the weight of their oppreſſion; they groaned under it, though they durſt not complain; they turned a wiſhful eye on every ſide, looking for deliverance. Eagerly did they liſten to eve-

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ry voice which ventured to ſpeak of reaſon and ſpiritual liberty, and were ready to throw down their burdens and to obey the call which accorded with the genuine tones of nature. The Waldenſes in Italy and Spain, the Albigenſes in France, the followers of Huſs in Germany, and of Wickliffe in England, all of whom aimed at the rejection of ſuperſtition, and the reſtoration of the truth in ſimplicity, were on popular ground; they poſſeſſed the reſpect and received the bleſſings of the people in the ages and countries in which they appeared; they failed merely becauſe they were borne down by force, and maſſacred by the troops which the intereſted patrons of ſuperſtition armed againſt them. The truth had foul play, otherwiſe it would have prevailed. The Chriſtian people had been at firſt cheated into ſuperſtition, and they were held in it only by fraud and by force.

The Reformation, for which the people had groaned for ages, was at laſt brought forward with ſucceſs in Germany and in Switzerland. The cauſe was popular beyond precedent; from province to province, and from kingdom to kingdom, it ſpread its influence like the ſun beams

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of morning after a long night of gloom. From the dreams of deluſion and terror, the Chriſtian man awoke, he gave thanks unto God who had ſaid, *Let there be light.*

The Reformation, which, ſpurning ſuperſtition, reverted to the ſimplicity of the goſpel in faith and worſhip, was for that very reaſon gladly embraced by the people; mankind naturally love the plain truth, and in their hearts deſpiſe the myſtical chicane, or the ceremonial evolutions by which they are enſlaved. The Reformers were revered as the friends of the human race. Their ſucceſs was great; and if the cauſe had been left to the fair deciſion of mankind individually, and to the effect of free diſcuſſion, all Europe would have regenerated its creed and its worſhip in the courſe of a few years; but there were various intereſts neceſſarily confederated and arrayed againſt it. The Phariſees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians of the age, with the Chief Prieſts and Scribes, theſe truſty battalions which compoſe the ſtanding army of ſpiritual uſurpation, reſiſted its progreſs from obvious motives. It was force alone exerted or menaced againſt the people which checked their growing inclination, prevented the general ſucceſs, and reſtricted the Reformation to a few countries of Europe.

From

From the whole deduction which has now been made, it appears, that ſuperſtition is uſeleſs; that truth and reaſon are alone to be depended on in giving a regular and ſafe determination to human actions; and that the idea of managing mankind by means of prejudices and by arts of deception is falſe philoſophy, as unwiſe as it is immoral.

That ſuperſtition when admitted in any extent within the Chriſtian church, muſt neceſſarily produce the conſequence of arreſting the progreſs of the goſpel, admits of being proved *a priori*, from the genius of the doctrine of the New Teſtament, without the induction which eccleſiaſtical hiſtory affords.

The plain and open ſpirit of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, the application to the natural impreſſions and to the good ſenſe of mankind, which was invariably made by our Lord and his apoſtles, were eſſential circumſtances (as has been already ſhewn) of the univerſal character attributed to the religion in its original fabric. Beſides the conſiderations which ſhew the impoſſibility of rendering any mode of ſuperſtition univerſal, it is remarkable that precautions were taken in the

the very firſt arrangements of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, to impede its progreſs under the contingent circumſtance of its corruption, and to prevent the viſible church from going beyond the bounds of the real church, which is according to ſimplicity and truth. The cares of our Lord to ſecure this object, account for a ſtriking circumſtance in his hiſtory, a ſhyneſs to admit among his followers many who offered to ſhare his fortunes. It was becauſe they only wiſhed to ſhare his fortunes in the expected dominion, and not to follow him in his humility and contempt of the world, that he declined their attendance until they ſhould come to him upon his own terms. The conduct of Providence towards the Jewiſh nation, in various parts of the New Teſtament hiſtory, manifeſts an unremitted attention to the ſame principle; that the cauſe ſhould be preſerved pure, at leaſt in its progreſs; and that it ſhould not be tendered to the Gentiles mixed with any portion of Jewiſh prejudice or of uſeleſs ceremonies.

The care of Providence has been exerted over the Chriſtian church in all ages to the ſame purpoſe. Men may by degrees corrupt Chriſtianity where it is, but they ſhall not propagate

it in this ſtate: they ſhall not ſpread error over the earth in the name of Chriſt: they ſhall not give to the Gentiles an inſtitute of pageantry and myſticiſm, calling it Chriſtianity; they may offer it if they will, but Providence in its general conduct ſhews that the Gentiles will not accept it.

The only exceptions which appear in hiſtory to theſe obſervations, occurred in ſome of the northern nations of Europe, to whom the religion reached after the growth of the corruption; but there were in theſe caſes ſuch ſtrong peculiarities of ſituation as fully account for the facts, without weakening the force of the general rule, which ſtands confirmed by the ſtated experience of the world.

Among the circumſtances of the grand corruption which have been moſt viſibly calculated to obſtruct the progreſs of the faith in new lands, conſiderable ſtreſs is to be laid on the errors and vices of the prieſts, eſpecially in the Roman Catholic ſyſtem. They have erred in laying claims to power and revenue on Divine Right, and in ſo connecting Chriſtianity with profeſſional ambition as to excite in the civil rulers of the

the unconverted nations a reaſonable jealouſy, and an alarm at the high demands of a body of eccleſiaſtical leaders, lords of the people's faith, by whoſe confederated hoſtility the ſtate might be endangered, or whoſe alliance it might be reduced to ſolicit. The teachers have further erred againſt the ſucceſs of the great cauſe, in their ſtrife of opinions among themſelves, when in their impatience of contradiction they have arrayed their anathemas as the guards of abſtract propoſitions, and have given a ſword inſtead of peace to the earth. Too often in various ages have they been ſeen to paſs their own uncharitableneſs for religious principle; to conſecrate in the name of God the rancour and antipathies which have been inſpired by the jealouſy of dominion and the pride of party; and to exhibit themſelves to the world as the patrons of intolerance. Among the Chriſtian prieſts, in defiance of the orders, of the tears, and of the blood of their Maſter, was that foul ſpirit generated; and in their councils it was nurſed. They have polluted the ſanctuary by human ſacrifices, and ſtill wiſhing to inflict more than temporal vengeance, they have wrought a fatal prejudice againſt the cauſe of the Redeemer, by pretending

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to exclude from eternal mercy the whole body of Heathens, heretics, and the members of every rival church and ſect; by ſcattering curſes around them where they were commanded to bleſs; and giving the Heathens room to ſuſpect that the Chriſtian ſyſtem itſelf is a gloomy, wrathful and vindictive ſcheme, inſtead of a covenant of grace.

III. Let us conſider the preſent aſpect of the Chriſtian world.——Although a ſerious man, in meditating on the ſtate of the church on earth, will ſee many things to deplore, yet when he takes into view the leading features of the times, he will be able to diſcern the cauſes in their full operation, which ſeem deſtined to bring forward the ſeaſon of ultimate ſucceſs to the Chriſtian religion.

1*ſt*, Learning is wholly and excluſively in the poſſeſſion of the Chriſtian nations. It revived among them after the long darkneſs of the middle ages; it taught the Reformers to fulfil and to defend their work: and learning in its turn derived from the Reformation an eſtabliſhed footing in Europe, through the ardour and the freedom of enquiry which that great event nouriſhed in the

the human mind. For above two centuries and an half it has advanced with a rapidity which has been uniformly accelerated; it has not only added ſplendour to the kingdoms of the Reformation, but has made an impreſſion upon the regions of Popery, where its effects muſt and will be deciſive in the ſubverſion of that ſuperſtition. Learning gives to the Chriſtian nations a marked ſuperiority of character which the Heathen muſt feel and reſpect; it forms the means by which Chriſtianity itſelf becomes better underſtood, by which it is ſeparated from the follies which have been attached to it, and by which the genuine beauty of ſcripture is unfolded to the world.

2*d*, The Chriſtians are improving in the article of forbearance. The tempers of men, in reſpect to religious differences are mitigated. The Spirit of perſecution, the Demon of intolerance, which is the Man of ſin, is enfeebled. God grant that it may never again obtain power to ſtain the countenance of the bleſſed Jeſus, to expoſe him in a purple robe, and to put him to open ſhame. Would to God we could ſay, that in this nation at leaſt, favoured as it has been of heaven, the ſpirit of Antichriſt is extinct.

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But our lips muſt here be cloſed, under the humiliating recollection of the ſcenes of violence which were exhibited in London and in Edinburgh in the year 1780, by perſons pretending to ſupport the Proteſtant intereſt, even while they were borrowing from Popery its worſt attribute, incurring the guilt of perſecution, and tarniſhing the beſt honours of the Reformation. "How "long, O Lord, holy and true, ſhall the image of "the beaſt yet ſpeak? and has its deadly wound "been healed?" Chriſtianity has received a new affront, and we muſt yet bluſh in ſilence under the recent recollection of the ſcenes at Birmingham and its neighbourhood within theſe two years, where fierce incendiaries aſſumed the character of Churchmen, and abuſed the venerable fabric of the Engliſh eſtabliſhment, by pretending that its honour and intereſt were their motives for applying firebrands to the houſes and property of the Diſſenters. This is indeed ſacrilege; to rob the church, not of its ſilver, its gold, or its veſtments; but to rob the church of its honour and glory, and of the charter of its Chriſtianity, by committing violence and perſecution in its name.

Notwithſtanding

Notwithſtanding ſome inſtances ſuch as theſe now mentioned, by which it appears that the old leaven is not wholly put away, it is certain that in reſpect of forbearance there is a ſenſible improvement of the Chriſtian world: and there is reaſon to hope that the time is not far diſtant when there ſhall be no more ſuffering for conſcience ſake, and, when men ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in the holy mountain of God.

3*d*, The commerce of the world is in the hands of the Chriſtian nations. The commercial ſyſtem in modern times has riſen to a magnitude which is without precedent in the hiſtory of human affairs. It is a new operative power introduced into the ſcheme of providence, and is obviouſly capable of producing great effects. Under the influence of this ſyſtem, the Chriſtians traverſe every ſea, viſit every iſland, and explore every continent. No people nor tribe are ſo obſcure as not to be in ſome degree affected by their operations, or brought within the ſphere of their influence. The Chriſtians themſelves are ſtationed in numbers on every ſhore, and poſted near the Heathen in all his dwellings.

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The preparations are visibly in forwardness; they are advanced; it requires only that the Christians should do their duty, and the great work will be accomplished.

Wherefore then is nothing done? Attempts have been often made both by Catholics and by Protestants, every one of which has totally failed, and ended in nothing. The Hindoo and Chinese, in the bosom of civilization, have been as inflexible to the efforts of a thousand missionaries, as the African or American. The Catholics have carried the scheme of missions to the greatest extent, they have been indefatigable in the work, and have turned their attention to every land; never was so much labour lost as in this case. Why will not the nations listen? Because God has given reason to them all. Will the American Indian obey the stranger who bids him give up his simple adoration of the great Spirit, to repeat words in an unknown tongue before a picture or over a string of beads?—Will the Chinese renounce the institutions of Confucius, to commit his soul and conscience to the custody of an Italian priest and his emissaries, and give up his understanding to be confounded with fictitious duties and fictitious sins?—Will

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the Hindoo abandon the Divine Being, whom he reveres under the threefold character of the Creator, the Preſerver, and the Deſtroyer, to bow the knee to St Antony, St Francis, and St Dominic; to ſubmit to a fantaſtic ritual addreſſed to a whole hoſt of dead men and women of the weſtern nations? The undertaking of theſe miſſionaries is deſperate in its own nature; it cannot ſucceed any where.

The miſſions from the Proteſtant churches preſent a different aſpect. They reject the whole apparatus on which the Catholics lay the ſtreſs of religion, yet neither have they ſucceeded at all. The fact muſt not be diſguiſed, they have totally failed. For this there may be various reaſons. Perhaps the miſſionaries are incapable men; perhaps they teach on a different principle from that which marked Chriſtian inſtruction in the days of its progreſs; perhaps it is their object to procure followers to a ſect, ininſtead of converts to a religion; miſtaking the peculiarities of their own party, whatever it is, for the eſſence of Chriſtianity, and teaching theſe as the leading objects of their miſſion. If theſe things are ſo, if they deliver any thing local, partial, and unreaſonable, or produce any of

the dark and intricate theories of ſcholaſtic divinity, inſtead of the plain doctrine of the New Teſtament, they muſt fail.

Chriſtianity, that it may advance, muſt be preſerved in its characters of univerſality; we may add, that it muſt alſo be ſeen in its regenerating power; and that, in this reſpect, we can trace a deciſive obſtacle to the ſucceſs of the miſſions, in the vices of the Chriſtian people. Let the miſſionary ſhew with both underſtanding and fervour, that Chriſtianity teaches men to live ſoberly in the world; is he likely to be credited, when the Indian can reply, that the men of his nation were temperate until the Chriſtians came to corrupt them; that theſe ſtrangers have brought among them the means and the habits of intemperance, and are profligate in their manners beyond any example known in ſavage life? Would the teacher ſhew that the Chriſtian law requires men to live godly in the world; the Pagan will here alſo be incredulous; he ſees the Europeans whom the buſineſs of war or of commerce has brought upon his coaſt, living without God in the world, diſregarding religious ordinances, and only uſing the name of God in curſing and profanity. Let the miſſionary alſo whiſper, that Chriſtianity teaches men to live righteouſly

righteouſly in the world; but where has he the face to ſay ſo? Is it to the tribes of America, where the firſt ſteps of the Europeans were marked with rapine and bloodſhed; where, by a great and regular ſyſtem of unrighteouſneſs, the natives are yearly robbed of freſh tracts of their land, and are driven from valley to valley, and from river to river: and where the white men in every tranſaction ſtudy to cheat their red brethren, the men of the woods? Is it in Africa that the miſſionary would ſpeak of righteouſneſs as the law of the Chriſtians? perhaps the native might reply: "When I was a child, I "heard of the Chriſtians, I have known them "in riper years, and my opinion of their prin-"ciples is not likely to alter: for from them "my heart received its firſt wound, and now "they have broken it. My father was bring-"ing water to us from the brook when the "Chriſtians fell upon him. They ſprung from "the thicket, like the tyger on his prey; they "beat him to the ground with clubs, they chain-"ed him down in a canoe, and bore him off in-"to ſlavery. In my youth they made me drink "of affliction, but now in my age its waters "have overwhelmed me. I was at a diſtance "from my home, when the Chriſtians and their "menhunters but two moons ago made war, as

"they

" they call it, in our valley: at the dead of
" night they beſet the village, they ſet fire
" to the houſes, they ſeized the flying fami-
" lies; and among the reſt, my wife, my
" only ſon, and my infant daughter were car-
" ried off, and are now on the ocean, faſtened
" to bolts of iron in your ſhips, never to know
" reſt or peace until the grave ſhall become
" their refuge from the Chriſtians. Chriſtians,
" your ſhips are red with innocent blood; ye
" make merchandiſe of the ſouls of men; your
" crimes hold Africa in ruins; the broken fami-
" lies of its natives appeal to God againſt you;
" it is you who deſtroy our morals and our
" comfort together; it is you who ſpread trea-
" chery, cruelty, deſpair and heartbreak over
" a whole continent. Until the Chriſtians a-
" bandon this monſtrous ſyſtem of outrage,
" Africa will never become Chriſtian."

The manners of the Chriſtians at large have an eſſential connection with the credit and ſucceſs of Chriſtianity in the world. A great work is to be done before it can go farther; the general reformation of the Chriſtians themſelves. Vice and ſuperſtition muſt fall; there muſt be a turning from ſin to righteouſneſs, and alſo a turning from darkneſs to light.

To

To effect an improvement in the morals of the Chriſtians at large, correſponding to the improvements which they have made and are daily making in ſcience, literature, and arts, may ſeem to be a problem of peculiar difficulty; it is ſo no doubt, but it is not deſperate. We know that at one period Chriſtians did adorn their doctrine, and in general lived as became them. The work is poſſible then; the New Teſtament is ſtill as capable as ever to diſplay its regenerating power; and the Spirit in the New Teſtament has ſhewn us that it ſhall diſplay this power, and ſhall then prevail. For the approach of that ſeaſon means are to be uſed: parents may do much; teachers of youth may work with benefit; miniſters of religion may unfold the ſcriptures in their genuine and effective character; civil rulers may encourage the progreſs of liberal knowledge, or at leaſt permit mankind to improve.

The removal of ſuperſtition, which muſt either precede or attend any moral improvements in the Chriſtian world, is to be conducted with delicacy and wiſdom, though it is certain that it may be effected completely and with entire ſafety, as well as with infinite benefit in the reſult, provided

provided only that no force or influence ſhall ever be uſed in this caſe, but the influence of reaſon and the force of truth.

An opinion of the ſtrength of ſuperſtition has been without due examination adopted by ſome ſpeculative men. The experience of the world, in numberleſs inſtances, ſome of which have been brought forward in this diſcourſe, ſhews that the opinion is a miſtake. Superſtition is not ſtrong; it is founded, not in nature, but in impoſition; in ſounds without ſenſe, in ceremonies without moral worth, and in authorities of men who lived in darker ages, and whoſe opinion or advice in any ordinary concern would be deemed of no conſequence whatever. Superſtition as an operative power in human affairs, is a clumſy machine, requiring all the props of intereſted art to ſuſtain it, and to prevent it from breaking down by its own weight. Ridicule can deſtroy it; ſophiſtry can ſubvert it; at the touch of philoſophy it will vaniſh.

True religion on the contrary, poſſeſſes a ſtrength which is effective and durable. It is principle, it is ſentiment, it is explicit and perſonal conviction. Againſt it ridicule has no point,

point; in its preſence ſophiſtry is ſilent, and to its worth philoſophy bears witneſs.

But is there no danger that in letting go ſuperſtition, true religion may fall with it? The ſubjects have been connected, and even the two ideas aſſociated for ages. There is force in the obſervation, in ſo far as it ſuggeſts that the meaſures which are adopted to deliver the church from ſuperſtition ought to be characteriſed by prudence, by gentleneſs, and by charity; That the work is to be entruſted to the operation of reaſon, ſet free on every ſide from reſtraint and fear; and that truth ſhould have fair play under the ſacred ſhade of entire and univerſal forbearance. But the ſtate of the Chriſtian intereſt does not permit it to remain in queſtion whether ſuperſtition ſhould be preſerved on account of any hazards real or ſuppoſed attending its removal, for it will not now be ſpared, it will fall, no human hands can bear it up much longer. Superſtition, while it has ſhut out the glories of true religion from the view of man, has from the horrors of its darkneſs generated a monſter which threatens to tear it in pieces: even as ſin produced death to beeome its deſtroyer, ſo ſuperſtition hath brought forth infidelity,

lity, and is already ſmitten by its offſpring. The queſtion now for the Chriſtian nations to conſider, is, whether infidelity which the intolerance of the Popiſh ſyſtem has foſtered, or genuine Chriſtianity which is nurſed by religious freedom, is to become the conqueror of ſuperſtition and to reign in its ſtead. The danger in the caſe is, that infidelity may become ſucceſsful, or may ſhare too widely in the conqueſt. This is an event on which philoſophy had not reckoned, and of which men were not aware, until of late that it has been exhibited with its moſt dreadful conſequences. At the Reformation, when the Catholic ſuperſtition received its firſt great ſhock, this danger was happily avoided ; The Reformers were men of piety and of ſound views : and while they day by day threw off from the Chriſtian church large portions of the rubbiſh which had been accumulating for ages, they became ſtill the more attached to the original fabric, and the more ſenſible of its dignity and perfection.

If in any caſe matters ſhould be conducted on oppoſite principles, if the tranſition ſhould be made from ſuperſtition to infidelity, the event muſt be deplorable; civil ſociety muſt be torn in pieces :

pieces: for even humanity would be gone, and without a ſubſtitute.

To illuſtrate this point, let it be conſidered that ſuperſtition itſelf is an aukward ſubſtitution of certain trifling things, inſtead of moral virtue; and of principles fierce and overbearing, inſtead of a reaſonable faith: that it abounds with obligations ſuch as they are; that it holds mankind quiet through fear; but has no humanity in its ſyſtem, and has a tendency to repreſs generoſity and mercy in the ſpirits of men. When therefore ſuperſtition has done its work in fixing a national character, and has rendered the tempers of men ſurly, ferocious, or ſanguinary; if infidelity ſhall then come forward, and without correcting the evil, ſhall cut aſunder all the remaining bonds and checks of obligation, and ſet ſociety adrift in this ſtate of its deſolation, all is loſt: the people to whom this happens are in moral ruin. Superſtition has firſt deſtroyed humanity, and when itſelf is deſtroyed, not by principle, but by want of principle, there remains not even a feeling which can ſtay the hand of violence or mitigate the lot of mankind. A great neighbouring nation has experienced this cataſtrophe; it is the firſt inſtance in the hiſtory of mankind,

and it has been incurred by the blind policy which induced its rulers to reſiſt the progreſs of the Reformation, and to cruſh by a long ſeries of oppreſſion thoſe Huguenots, who by reaſoning and good ſenſe alone would have ſupplanted the ſuperſtition by degrees, and gained over the people to a purer faith and better principles. But the Catholic religion, the great engine which operated deſtruction on the moral character of the people, was ſupported excluſively by the ſecular power, and the neceſſary conſequence was, that its fall was delayed for a time, only that it might become more dreadful. The philoſophers, confounding Chriſtianity with its corruptions, drew their premiſes from the latter to diſcredit both. The French people, not knowing what religion in its ſimplicity was, felt the force of the arguments which expoſed the national ſuperſtition, and were convinced that its principles were abſurd, its ſervice trifling, and its arrangements prieſtcraft. They thought that this was religion which had been refuted, and they threw the whole away. It was then that God Almighty was renounced in the National Aſſembly, that civil blood ſtreamed without remorſe, and that the poignard became the law of the people. The judicial principle of providence

dence enters into the connection of cauſe and effect in the fate of nations. The maſſacre of St Bartholomew, and the revocation of the edict of Nantes, were deeds of enormous ſacrilege; they are in the book of remembrance, and in the ſeries of cauſation; they cruſhed the regenerating influence of ſpiritual freedom, they added ferocity to the national character, and taught the people the leſſons of murder and extermination, as the treatment of the weaker party: and dreadful has the application been. The heavens ſtill lour over the ſcene; the end is not yet. To a thinking Chriſtian there remains only this conſolation, that all things ſhall work together for good; that the overruling providence of God makes the wrath of man to praiſe him; and that in his own unſearchable ways he will accompliſh his preparations for the reign of virtue in the ages of peace.

In the preſent aſpect of the Chriſtian world, we ſee many circumſtances which have a viſible tendency to facilitate the progreſs of the goſpel in ſome future period; and other circumſtances which obſtruct its advancement at preſent, and may continue to do ſo until they are

removed.

removed. The want of ſucceſs in time paſt is no reaſon for the friends of religion to deſiſt from all attempts in future; it is only a reaſon for trying the effects of ſome different modes from thoſe which have always failed, and for proceeding upon a full knowledge of the caſe, with wiſdom and diſcretion, as well as with zeal. What the modes are which may be adopted in the foreign ſervice with any proſpect of ſucceſs it is not eaſy to ſay; perhaps they ought to be as various as are the characters of the nations. With regard to one great nation, the Hindoos, where the leading caſts are compoſed of men of ſtudy, and habituated to profound reflection; it has been ſuggeſted by the Preſident of the Aſiatic Society in Calcutta *, of all men the moſt competent judge on this ſubject, that there occurs only one mode in which an impreſſion may be poſſible. Let no miſſionaries be employed, let a book be prepared conſiſting of the cleareſt prophecies of the Old Teſtament which relate to the Chriſtian diſpenſation, accompanied with hiſtorical proofs that theſe prophecies exiſted before the Chriſtian æra. Let it next contain

* Sir William Jones.

contain one of the four goſpels, and the Acts of the Apoſtles,—accompanied ſimply with proofs of the authenticity of the writings; but let no commentary nor reflections be admitted. The copies of this book in the languages of the country might be placed within the reach of the reading men all over India: it is neceſſary that Europeans ſhould take no farther charge of it; let it be found as the treaſure which has been hid in a field, let it work its way in ſilence upon the Aſiatic mind. If this beginning ſhould be proſperous, it would be eaſy to introduce in due ſeaſon the other books of ſcripture to a willing people.

This propoſal, which carries with it the ſtrong characters of genius, ſuggeſts to the mind ſome topics of important reflection. If Chriſtianity ſhould thus be ſown rather than planted in a new land, without any thing which has been derived through the eccleſiaſtical or civil literature of the weſtern nations, but the ſcriptures and the ancient hiſtory which is collateral with the ſcriptures; and if in this ſtate of total and eſſential detachment from any traditions or uſages later than the apoſtolic age, it ſhould become the predominant religion; what would be the form

of

of the Chriſtian church in that land? how would its divines reaſon and decide in ſpeculative queſtions? What regulations in the conduct of worſhip would they embrace? what ceremonies or plans of church government would they adopt? To a philoſophical divine nothing could be more curious and intereſting than a new church, formed in the circumſtances now ſuppoſed. In whatever country this ſhould take place, the new ſyſtem might no doubt be expected to bear in ſome degree the character of the ſoil; yet much might be learned from examining a ſcene ſo peculiar. Although the ſpecific arrangements which a church in ſuch circumſtances might adopt, cannot be antecedently known, the mind may dwell on a topic like this with edification. It may at leaſt throw us out of the line of our prejudices and habits for a moment, and teach us to bear with one another. The Chriſtian communities now mentioned, might in many particular articles of opinion, worſhip and government, exhibit very different features from any or all of the churches of the Weſt, yet hold the eſſential characters of Chriſtianity as truly as they. Would it not then be our duty to receive them as brethren, and to meet them in the fellowſhip of the goſpel, and in the communion

munion of its ordinances? You think it would; and that your Chriſtian communion, in ſuch a caſe as this, ought not to be dependent upon uniformity in opinion or obſervance. It is well, your principle is liberal and good; but it needs not be laid aſleep until an opportunity ſuch as has now been ſuppoſed ſhall occur; there is work for it here. We have Chriſtian churches variouſly conſtituted: and we have many claſſes of ſectaries and diſſenters, ſincere and honeſt Chriſtians, who do not by any means differ ſo widely from our notions of doctrine, worſhip and government, as a new church might. Go then, and reſpect now in Europe what you own would form a Chriſtian obligation in Aſia.

It were to be wiſhed, that men of talents, whoſe engagements lead them to reſide among the other nations who are yet ſtrangers to Chriſtianity, would turn their attention to the ſubject of introducing Chriſtian knowledge, and communicate their thoughts upon the means of making a proper impreſſion upon the countries with which they are connected. It is poſſible that by reſorting to plans hitherto unthought of, adapted reſpectively to different countries,

many

many of the difficulties which have hitherto operated fatally in this ſervice may be avoided.

Theſe things however are hypothetical. The general reformation of the Chriſtians is the great object, which when accompliſhed will operate the certain ſucceſs of the religion of our Lord. Every undertaking which contributes to this end, performs its part in the plan of providence, by which Chriſtianity ſhall become univerſal. To take charge of the youth in a Chriſtian land, and in thoſe remote diſtricts where the means of inſtruction are few, to train them to knowledge and to ſound principles, is not only in itſelf a good work, but may produce effects in diſtant times, ſuch as cannot at preſent be the ſubjects of calculation. This work in the Highlands and Iſlands of Scotland, though not the only, is the principal object of the reſpectable Society to which I have addreſſed theſe obſervations. It is a work of wiſdom, of piety, and of charity.

Now we ſee not yet all things put under him. Chriſtians, let not the partial ſucceſs which the cauſe of truth has as yet obtained, diſquiet your minds. It was intended to be a work of ages in its progreſs, and like the other works of God,

to

to proceed gradually to the conſummation. The loftieſt trees of the foreſt have ſprung up from ſmall ſeeds, and have borne the ſtrife of the elements through many winters before they have come to their perfection : So the tree which the Lord hath planted muſt encounter the tempeſt during its growth, and ſuffer many chilling blaſts, which may arreſt its progreſs in their ſeaſons ; but it ſhall at laſt ſend forth its boughs on every ſide, and its ſhade ſhall be for the refreſhing of the nations.

It is not yet eighteen hundred years ſince the introduction of Chriſtianity. In the plan of God, with whom a thouſand years are but as one day, eighteen centuries may form but a ſmall part of the duration of the kingdom of Chriſt in this ſcene of things. The prophets have given notice of a ſcheme of immenſe extent, and only a ſmall part of it is as yet filled up. God will be glorified in its real and durable ſucceſs. The Chriſtian churches ſhall be purified and united in affection ; the goſpel ſhall be ſeen in its moral character and its attractive power ; every falſe religion ſhall give way, and all the families of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in Jeſus, and call him bleſſed ; infidelity ſhall diſappear, war ſhall ceaſe, and ſlavery ſhall be heard of no more.

The actual effects of the great interpoſition ſhall then be diſplayed, through long periods of time, which are indefinitely expreſſed in prophecy by the term of a thouſand years. For how many thouſand years in eventual numeration the promiſed ſtate of things may endure, it is impoſſible to tell; but, it is conſolatory to the human mind, amidſt the ſorrows and anxieties with which many of the events in the hiſtory of mankind are viewed, to reflect that the Lord reigneth, and that under his providence the preparations are making in ſecret for the manifeſtation of his univerſal kingdom, in the recovery of the nations to virtue, piety, and peace. *The wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child ſhall lead them. And the ſucking child ſhall play on the hole of the aſp, and the weaned child ſhall put his hand on the den of the viper. They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea.*

Amen, Even ſo, Come Lord Jeſus.

F I N I S.

APPENDIX.

SOCIETY HALL, Dec. 1st, 1793.

SINCE the publication of the laſt Anniverſary Sermon, and Appendix, little has occurred in the affairs or proceedings of the Society, of magnitude ſufficient to claim the attention of the public. The directors and officers continue, with undeviating perſeverance, to proſecute the great and important objects of the inſtitution; but a minute detail of their ordinary official operations would prove but little intereſting to the public, or even to the particular friends of the Society. In the laſt Appendix, a narrative was given of the progreſs which the directors had then made in the execution of the plan formerly laid before the public, for the expenditure of their large additional funds. To that plan they continue ſtedfaſtly to adhere as their finances enable them; but they have to mention, not without regret, that although the enlarged plan of expenditure for the current year, commencing on the firſt of May, was formed upon the idea of their receiving Lord Van-

Vryhouven's

Vryhouven's legacy; yet they have as yet been able to recover no part, either of the principal ſum, or of the intereſt due upon it; they have in conſequence, from their eager deſire that the public ſhould derive the earlieſt poſſible advantage from that great bequeſt, ſubjected themſelves to the temporary inconveniencies of an anticipation. They indulge the hope, however, that this delay of payment, owing to the tedioufneſs of the forms of the Court of Chancery, will be ſoon got over, and the Society allowed to proſecute with full vigour the ſeveral parts of their plan: The firſt of which was, "To augment the ſalaries of the teachers upon their eſtabliſhment." This they have done, and are continuing to do, as varying circumſtances and neceſſities require.

2d, The "Gaelic tranſlation" of the New Teſtament has undergone a reviſal. The types are ordered, and an impreſſion of Twenty Thouſand copies is immediately to be put to the preſs.

The remaining volume of the Gaelic tranſlation of the Old Teſtament, which has for a conſiderable time been in the preſs, is going on; and ſome of the moſt difficult parts of it are already printed.

3d, A variety of "new ſchools for religion, literature, and the Engliſh language" have been eſtabliſhed in the Highlands and Iſlands. But the directors have to expreſs ſincere regret that, owing to the backwardneſs of proprietors in furniſhing the neceſſary accommodations, many fewer have been granted than they were diſpoſed to give; and that to a variety of ſtations, where ſchools were ordered, and ſalaries allotted, they were prevented

from

from ſending teachers, by the ſame cauſe, viz. the total want of accommodations, notwithſtanding of the moſt ſpecific and poſitive engagements to furniſh them. The directors will not repeat the arguments which, in their laſt Appendix, they took the liberty to uſe with the highland proprietors upon this ſubject: They only beg leave to hint, that the late events in a neighbouring nation, which have ſtruck all Europe with aſtoniſhment and horror, ſeem to afford evidence ſufficient, that not the *knowledge* of the great principles of religion and morals, but the *want* of it, and of the proper means of inſtruction, is the greateſt foe to regular ſubordination and good order in human ſociety; and that men ignorant and unprincipled are the fitteſt tools of the factious and deſperate. Unreſtrained by impreſſions and habits of religion received in youth, unawed by a ſenſe of Deity, or the fears of future retribution, they are eaſily excited to inſurrection againſt eſtabliſhed authority, and to every crime which licentious and ſelfiſh paſſions may ſuggeſt. They are ſhallow politicians, who ſtudy to emancipate the people from the reſtraints of religion; and not much more profound are they, who either ſtudy to keep them in ignorance, or refuſe to employ the means within their reach, for conveying to them the knowledge of thoſe principles, which alone can form peaceable and worthy citizens.

The directors have rejected no petition for a ſchool in the Highlands or Iſlands, where the ſtate of the country required one, where a parochial ſchool is eſtabliſhed, and

where

where the accommodations are promiſed; but large experience, and that of the laſt and current year in particular, teaches them the abſolute neceſſity of adhering to the rule they have adopted, " to ſend no ſchoolmaſter to a ſtation, though included in their ſcheme of of ſchools, *where the accommodations are not actually provided, and ready for the reception of the teacher.*

By the ſcheme of the preſent year, no leſs than *twenty one* new ſchools upon the firſt patent, (viz. for religion, literature, and the Engliſh language) were ordered to be eſtabliſhed; though of theſe, it is confeſſed, ſeveral have not taken effect. But this is not to be imputed to the directors, or their officers who immediately under them conduct the buſineſs of the Society, but to the cauſe above ſpecified, viz. the want of accommodations; or, in other words, becauſe the proprietors, though the Society is willing to pay the whole ſalary (from L. 12 to L. 15 per annum) will not be at the expence of a decent houſe and ſchool-houſe, and of a bit of ground ſufficient to maintain a cow;---articles without which it is impoſſible for a man to live in the country with any degree of reſpectability and comfort.

By the ſcheme of the current year, the number of ſchools upon the eſtabliſhment of the Society, according to their firſt patent, amounts to *two hundred and ſixteen.*

Of theſe, reports have been received from *one hundred and ſixty three,* by which it appears that the number of ſcholars attending them is *ſeven thouſand eight hundred and eighty one,* which makes an average of more than

fifty

fifty one to each ſchool. Eſtimating thoſe attending the the remaining *ſixty three*, by the ſame rule, the whole number of ſcholars taught upon the eſtabliſhment of the Society, according to their firſt patent, will amount to *eleven thouſand and ninety four*. Of this multitude of children, the far greater part, there is every reaſon to ſuppoſe, but for this eſtabliſhment, would be conſigned over to the profoundeſt and moſt deplorable ignorance of the religion, laws, and language of their country. For the current year, the ſalaries payable to the above two hundred and ſixteen ſchoolmaſters amounts to *two thouſand ſix hundred and ten pounds*.

4. The fourth branch of the Society's plan was, "to give encouragement to the introduction of uſeful induſtry and manufactures into the Highlands and Iſlands." Want of funds (from the cauſe above-mentioned) and want of co-operation upon the part of the proprietors, have occaſioned leſs progreſs to be made in this than in any other part of the ſcheme; yet *fifteen* new erections of different deſcriptions, for the introduction and encouragement of arts and induſtry, afford ſufficient evidence, that to this article the directors have not been inattentive. A variety of plans for more, are under conſideration, and in due time ſhall be carried forward, as their finances, and a prudent attention to circumſtances, ſhall permit.

The number of teachers, and perſons employed by the Society for the introduction and encouragement of arts and induſtry, amounts to *ninety one*; of children and others educated at their different ſeminaries, for

theſe purpoſes, according to a fair average formed upon the reports received, to *eighteen hundred and nineteen*; and of the ſalaries payable this year, to the teachers, to *four hundred and ſeventy pounds*.

5. The "eſtabliſhment of miſſionary miniſters", in thoſe parts of the Highlands and Iſlands, where they are moſt peculiarly needed, was another and moſt important object of the Society's plan, for the expenditure of their additional funds.

To the miſſion in the pariſh of Bracadale in Skye, formerly deſcribed, has been added this year, the one mentioned in the laſt Appendix, in Lord Reay's country, comprehending extenſive diſtricts in the pariſhes of Edrachylles and Tongue, and where the miſſionary will have to officiate in three different places of worſhip. The appointment was to have taken place on the Firſt of November laſt; and a clergyman of eſtabliſhed character in that country, agreeable to the Society, and acceptable to all concerned, was named to be Miſſionary. The directors were informed that the accommodations were carrying forward with ſpirit and alacrity, and would be in readineſs at the time ſpecified. The clergyman was ready to enter upon his charge, and the Society to have given him his commiſſion. They waited only for a certificate from the preſbytery, of the accommodations being in readineſs. Inſtead of this, they were lately told that, owing to a diſappointment in the arrival of the wood, which had been commiſſioned from abroad, the houſes cannot be finiſhed till next ſeaſon, and, of conſequence, according to the

rule

rule which the Society have laid down, the complete eſtabliſhment of this miſſion muſt be deferred.

A third miſſion has been agreed to at Newbyth, in the extenſive pariſh of King Edward, and ſhire of Banff, in conſequence of a mutual tranſaction between the Societey and the proprietor, who, much to his honour, though of a different religious perſuaſion, has not only become bound for, and taken care to have the accommodations required by the Society actually furniſhed, but obliged himſelf to pay the one half of the ſalary, or L. 25 per annum :--- an example which the directors are happy to exhibit to the public, accompanied with their earneſt wiſhes that northern proprietors in general were actuated by a ſimilar liberality of ſpirit. A clergyman, recommended by the preſbytery of the bounds, the proprietor, the miniſter of the pariſh, and a very great number of the heads of families in the diſtrict, has been named to that miſſion; and his ſalary is to commence from and after the firſt of November laſt.

Petitions for a variety of other miſſions in ſtations where the neceſſity of them is evident, have been preſented to the Society by the clergy and people of the ſeveral diſtricts. It is with ſincere regret that the Directors find themſelves obliged, by the rules they have adopted, to refuſe compliance in ſome ſuch caſes. They have, in a former Appendix, ſtated to the public the reaſons of their having required the accommodations there enumerated, and which appear to them abſolutely neceſſary to the independence, comfort, and reſpectability of a clergyman in the country. When they are willing to beſtow L. 50

per annum for the maintainance of a miniſter, they think it hard that proprietors, eſpecially ſuch as can afford it, ſhould refuſe him *a plain houſe to live in, a place of worſhip, with as much ground, during his incumbency, as will maintain for him a horſe and two cows.* They will not repeat the reaſoning employed upon this ſubject in the laſt Appendix. They only wiſh it to be known by the public, that they are willing and diſpoſed to devote a large proportion of their additional funds, (as ſoon as they ſhall come into their poſſeſſion) to this important object; at the ſame time that they are determined to adhere to the juſt and reaſonable terms which they have propoſed. They indulge the hope, that, in proceſs of time, proprietors will be convinced that their intereſt, no leſs than humanity, urges them to compliance.

6. With reſpect to the laſt branch of the Society's plan,---the eſtabliſhment of *burſaries* or penſions, for the maintenance of ſtudents in theology *having the Gaelic language*, they have faithfully adhered to the terms which they announced to the public.

At the commencement of the preſent ſeſſion of the Divinity Hall, as well as of the preceeding, ſtudents of the above deſcription, were invited by advertiſements in the newſpapers, to appear on a particular day, to produce their certificates, and undergo an examination upon ſeveral branches of ſcience ſpecified, and which every ſtudent who has gone through a regular courſe of Philoſophy, muſt be ſuppoſed to have ſtudied. A variety of candidates did accordingly appear, and were examined. Such as acquitted themſelves

themſelves to the ſatisfaction of the examiners, were immediately put upon the liſt of the Society's burſars. If ſome were rejected, it was with the deep regret of the examiners, and only becauſe they could not in conſcience, conſider them as qualified *at the time*, in terms of the Society's regulations. It will afford to them the moſt ſincere ſatisfaction, if, upon a future occaſion, any of theſe candidates ſhall enable them, in a conſiſtency with their duty, to ſuſtain them. At the laſt examination, the Directors exhibited ſufficient evidence, that ſuch candidates will not be rejected.

The burſaries of the Society are ſix in number, at Fifteen Pounds per ann. each; and it is their earneſt wiſh to have them all conſtantly filled up by young men of piety and ability.

Thus the Directors continue to fulfil their engagements, in the execution of the plan which they had laid down for the regulation of their conduct, and which they have had ſufficient reaſon to believe has obtained public approbation.

As a particular liſt of their ſchools was publiſhed in the Appendix to the laſt Anniverſary Sermon, they thought an abſtract view of their eſtabliſhments, as ſettled by the ſcheme of the current year, might ſuffice, in the preſent. It is added therefore to this Appendix.

The hall, in which the Society have held their meettings and done buſineſs for many years, has been long complained of as difficult of acceſs, dark, and every way inconvenient

inconvenient in point of accommodation. The directors, fully ſenſible of the juſtice of theſe complaints, applied to the General Meeting, near three years ago, for their ſanction to a propoſal of building or purchaſing a new hall with ſuitable offices. It was unanimouſly agreed to, and a committee appointed to carry the meaſure into execution. But for two years, they found themſelves unable, though diligence was not wanting, to accompliſh their object. The city of Edinburgh has now become ſo much extended, both to the north and ſouth, that a centrical ſituation in the Old Town was deemed abſolutely neceſſary, in order to procure the attendance of members.

Such a ſituation for a long time could not be found, except at an expence which the directors were unwilling to beſtow. At length, one occurred near to what was formerly the Nether-bow Port. A houſe and offices formerly belonging to and occupied by the Hon. John Maule, Eſq. one of the Barons of Exchequer, being offered for ſale at a price thought moderate, it was purchaſed by the directors. Part of the houſe having been built by the Baron, was ſubſtantial and good, part of it old and ruinous. That part of it, after due conſideration, and obtaining the opinions of reſpectable tradeſmen, the directors agreed to take down and rebuild. A plan having been made out and approved, advertiſements were publiſhed, inviting tradeſmen to give in propoſals for the execution of it. Of a variety, the moſt moderate was preferred The work is now carrying on; and

ſometime

ſometime during the courſe of the enſuing ſummer, there is reaſon to hope, will be finiſhed.

Little elſe of a new or intereſting nature in the proceedings of the Society claims the attention of the public.

The Anniverſary Meeting of the London Correſponding Board was held about the uſual time in the month of April. The ſermon was preached by Mr Noah Hill, a Preſbyterian clergyman in London. From the unfortunate ſtate of things in the mercantile world at that period, as well as ſome other circumſtances, particularly a call of the Houſe of Commons on that day which prevented the attendance of the members, the company was neither ſo numerous, nor the collection ſo ample, as upon ſome former occaſions; yet theſe circumſtances conſidered, the ſum was large, and the thanks of the Society are in a peculiar manner due to thoſe by whoſe exertions chiefly it was obtained.

From the continued regular communications of the Boſton Board of Correſpondence, the directors are happy to find, that the miſſionaries and ſchoolmaſters they have employed in America for the civilization and Chriſtianiſing of the Indians, do their duty with zeal, and with as much ſucceſs as is reaſonably to be expected.

GENERAL

GENERAL ABSTRACT of the SOCIETY'S ESTABLISHMENTS for the Year, from 1st May 1793, to 1st May 1794.

Number of Eſtabliſhments.				*Number of Scholars.*	*Amount of Salaries.*
In SCOTLAND	First Patent	Schools -	216	11,094	*L.* 2610
		Miſſionaries and Catechiſts	10		271
		Burſaries -	6 *		90
	Second Patent	Schools -	91	1819	470
In AMERICA	First Patent	Miſſionaries	2		100
		Schoolmaſter for the Indians	1		39
		Totals	326	12,913	*L.* 3571

* Three of them are at preſent vacant.

THE PRESIDENT, DIRECTORS, AND OFFICERS

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR THE YEAR 1793.*

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PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

Committee of Directors.

ROBERT EARL OF KINNOUL, Preſident.

James Forreſt, Eſq. of Comieſton, Clerk to his Majeſty's Signet.

Sir James Colquhoun of Luſs, Bart. one of the principal Clerks of Seſſion.

Rev. T. S. Jones, Miniſter of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel.

John Gardner, Eſq. Banker in Edinburgh.

Walter Scott, Eſq. Clerk to his Majeſty's Signet.

William Ker, Eſq. Secretary to the General Poſt-Office.

Rev. Walter Buchanan, one of the Miniſters of Canongate.

Sir William Forbes of Pitſligo, Bart. Banker in Edinburgh.

Rev. Thomas Randall, D. D. one of the Miniſters of Edinburgh.

Mr Alexander Pitcairn, Merchant in Edinburgh.

Mr Andrew Hamilton, Deputy Comptroller of Exciſe.

Sir John Wiſhart Belſches of Fettercairn, Bart. Advocate.

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At the Annual Meeting in Jan. 1794, in room of Mr Forreſt, Sir James Colquhoun, and Mr Jones, who went out of the Committee in courſe, the three following Gentlemen were choſen, viz.

David Reid, Eſq. one of the Commiſſioners of Cuſtoms.
John Dickſon, Eſq. of Coulter, Advocate.
Rev. David Johnſtone, D. D. Miniſter of North Leith.

Officers of the Society.

Rev. John Kemp, D D. one of the Miniſters of Edinburgh, Secretary.
John Davidſon, Eſq. Deputy Keeper of his Majeſty's Signet, Treaſurer.
William Galloway, Eſq. Merchant in Edinburgh, Comptroller.
Robert Chalmers, Eſq. General Accountant of Exciſe, Accountant.
Mr Archibald Lundie, Clerk to the Signet, Book-holder.
Mr James Robertſon, Writer in Edinburgh, Clerk.
Mr John Pitcairn, Merchant in Edinburgh, Librarian.
M. Gray, Bookſeller in Edinburgh, Bookſeller.
Mungo Watſon, Beadle.

Annual and other Benefactions are received by,

The Secretary, Treaſurer, or any of the Principal Officers of the Society in Edinburgh.

In London,

By Thomas Coutts, Eſq. Banker in the Strand.
William Fuller, Eſq and Son, Bankers, Lombard-Street.
Henry Hunter, D. D. Charles' Square, Hoxton, Secretary to the Correſponding Board in London.